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151—THE LAST HOPE



THE LAST HOPE.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH—LOUIS MOREAU GOTTSCHALK (gôts'-chôlk).

Born in New Orleans, 1829.

Died in Rio de Janiero, Brazil, Dec. 18, 1869.

HE was the first American composer and artist to gain distinction and European recognition, a distinction he well deserved for the attractiveness of his music, and his own fascinating playing. He was born in New Orleans, of French parentage. The boy showing musical gifts of a rare order at a very early age, his father diligently fostered them, so that as a boy he made many public appearances in his own country and played his early compositions, always with charm and public success.

When Moreau (as the family always called him) was 12 years old his father took him to Paris and entered him with Stamaty, the distinguished teacher of piano at the Conservatory, and with Maleden in harmony. Here he continued his studies until he was 17; taking a vacation now and then for a short concert tour through the provinces of France and Switzerland, where he was received with great favor. In 1852 he made a tour in Spain, where his extremely brilliant and highly rhythmatized playing exactly took the Spanish fancy, the Queen, in particular, being very fond of his playing.

In 1853 he began his concert tours in the United States, and these continued at intervals during the next ten years, with occasional visits to Cuba, etc. The late Max Strakosch engaged him in 1865 for a long American tour, taking in California and the central cities of Mexico and the other states adjacent. Later he went on a grand tour of South America, where he met a success almost royal. He played everywhere his own compositions; he organized local festivals, with chorus and orchestra, copying out with his own hands the innumerable orchestral parts for the large bodies of players he brought together.

In these he produced compositions often specially composed for the occasion, full of patriotic and national fervor, and always full of that sharp and fascinating rhythm of the negro and native dances and songs. His own playing was but an incident in these concerts, yet an incident without which the concerts could not have taken place. Owing to the hard work involved in these affairs, and the continual strain, he became debilitated and so fell a victim of fever and died at Rio de Janiero, in 1869, at the early age of 40. Many of his works, especially those still in manuscript, were lost and never recovered. This was true, especially of these festival works, in which he made such remarkable successes.

During the most of the American war, Gottschalk lived with his mother and younger brothers and sisters in Paris, where his home became a salon, to which gathered most of the gifted musicians, writers and artists of the time. Here were brilliant thoughts, spirited and striking music, and everything which makes life attractive.

A younger brother of Gottschalk (a half brother) is still living, Mr. L. Gaston Gottschalk, a distinguished operatic baritone, later a prominent teacher of singing in Chicago and at the present writing (1911) living in Portland, Oregon.

As a pianist Gottschalk was gifted with a very commanding touch; he played brilliant passages with tremendous brilliancy, and melodies with a most delightful sentiment. His own melodies, which were peculiarly original with him, were truly charming. At the time when he was before the public it was the fashion for pianists to exploit their technique in operatic fantasias, but Gottschalk indulged in this style but little, preferring his own melodies and the peculiar rhythmic piquancy native to southern lands. The late Dr. William Mason, who knew him quite well and was contemporaneous with him, used to say that such was the charm of Gottschalk's touch, that if he had taken a notion to play scales an entire evening, his audience would have held themselves spell-bound all the same, such was the charm of his touch and personality.

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Gottschalk, as one of the very earliest of American piano composers, naturally attracted the attention of the musical critics, especially of those who stood for the standard and classical. The late John S. Dwight, of Boston, was one who especially distinguished himself by his contemptuous criticisms upon the work of the young American. Whereupon Gottschalk played a trick upon him. At his next concert in Boston he played under his own name a little known composition of Beethoven; and under the name of Beethoven, a freshly discovered and attractive melody. Whereupon the critic took occasion to contrast the simplicity and naturalness of the Beethoven piece with the pianist's own composition; only to be apologized to later for the unfortunate mistake of placing the pieces wrongly as to their writers. Gottschalk thanked Dwight for noticing his own work so favorably.

Gottschalk by no means confined his compositions to the piano. He wrote two operas, "Chas. IX.," and "Isaura de Salerno," which it is believed were never performed. Two symphonies for full orchestra, "A Night in the Tropics" and "Montivideo," which he had played with brilliant success at his festivals, for which they were no doubt written. He wrote about 12 songs, of which the beautiful slumber song, "Slumber on, Baby Dear," is perhaps the most attractive; another, "Oh Trusting Heart, Trust On," is an impassioned and eminently singable melody.

His piano works were written for his own playing. Mme. Carreño, who was a pupil of this master for quite a long time in New York, says that Gottschalk played all the classical repertoire of the piano beautifully, especially Beethoven and Chopin. His time was earlier than that in which Schumann's work began to attract attention. Among the most popular of his own compositions for the drawing room are his "Last Hope," "The Dying Poet," his "Berceuse" (the same as the song "Slumber On") his brilliant "Bananier," his first piece, a negro dance, worked up to a climax, and his "Bamboula," another negro rhythm, handled with exceeding brilliancy. These compositions, especially the last named, involve lightning-like interchange of hands upon chords, and are of great difficulty, even now when piano technic has so much advanced. Among the 90 piano compositions of his, there are probably others which will come back again into popularity some of these days, inasmuch as they have taking melody, striking rhythms and brilliant piano effects.

A very admirable thing of his, is his four hand piano arrangement of the Overture to "William Tell," a most brilliant piece for exhibitions.

In his "Notes of a Pianist," originally contributed to the Atlantic Monthly, Gottschalk gives many whimsical accounts of his concert tours in this country. The book is well worth reading, both as a document from a charming personality, and for the side-lights it throws upon the uncultivated state of the country at large, during and after the civil war.

THE POETIC IDEA—"During his stay in Cuba," says the famous musical writer, M. Gustave Choquet in "La France Musicale," "Gottschalk found himself at S—, where a woman of mind and heart, to whom he had been particularly recommended, conceived for him at once the most active sympathy, in one of those sweet affections almost as tender as maternal love.

Struck down by an incurable malady, Madam S— mourned the absence of her only son, and could alone find forgetfulness of her sufferings while listening to her dear pianist, now become her guest and her most powerful physician. One evening, while suffering still more than usual—"In pity," said she, making use of one of the ravishing idioms of the Spanish tongue—"In pity, my dear Moreau, one little melody, the last hope!" And Gottschalk commenced to improvise an air at once plaintive and pleasing—one of those spirit-breaths that mount sweetly to heaven, whence they have so recently descended. On the morrow, the traveler-artist was obliged to leave his friend, to fulfill an engagement in a neighboring city. When he returned, two days afterwards, the bells of the church of S— were sounding a slow and solemn peal. A mournful presentiment suddenly froze the heart of Gottschalk, who, hurrying forward his horse, arrived upon the open square of the church just at the moment when the mortal remains of Senora S— were brought from the sacred edifice.

This is why the great pianist always played with so much emotion the piece that sad memories have caused him to name "The Last Hope," and why, in replying to his fair questioner, he called it his "Evening Prayer."

SUGGESTIONS FOR STUDY—"The Last Hope" as a whole has the character of an improvisation, in which many short but charming ideas are touched upon, tried in different keys, chromatically harmonized, and so on, preparatory to bringing in the main melody, which the composer has had in his mind all the while. Thus the entire form consists of three large chapters. The main melody forms the middle chapter, extending from measure 46 to measure 62; repeated later with a few harmonic changes, measures 68 to 83.

The Introduction comprises no less than 46 measures, during which five short melodic ideas are touched upon, here marked Melody A, Melody B, C, D, E, F. Let us take them in order:

Melody A is like an organ beginning, the voices coming in each in turn with the same melody or start (two notes). Bring out this leading of voices.

In measures 5, 6, and 12, 13, we have the embellishing figure which is so marked a feature of this piece, being used as many as 64 times in various chords. It is important, therefore, to learn to do it well, namely as follows: (a) play all five notes together, both hands; (b) then play the right hand chord first and left hand chord instantly after; (c) next play the tones moderately in order, five tones to make the figure, closing with a staccato accent. Be careful that the left hand comes in quickly after the right hand note, so that it has the effect of completing the melodic idea of five tones; (d) play the five notes with a very sharp, crisp touch, the last being extremely staccato. Gottschalk used to play this group as if with very delicate fingers of steel. Melody B is "A" repeated in a different key.

Melody C consists of the melo-harmonies in measure 14 (last half) to beginning of measure 16. The soprano is to be a little more distinct than the other voices, but the chromatic progressions must be very close and legato. In measure 16 he changes the key enharmonically (C Sharp to D Flat, sounding the same, but named and written differently, thus "enharmonic") and repeats in the new key closing in the chord of A Flat. In measure 18 (last half) he begins a new melodic idea, which must carry quite through to its end at "2" of measure 20; after which it goes again, closing in measure 22. The full cadence in B Minor, in measures 25, 26, marks the end of a complete chapter of introduction. Then in measure 27 he changes the mode to B Major and in measure 31 brings in the short Melody E, repeated in measures 36, 37, followed by some fast running work closing in measures 44, 45, 46, where the main melody begins.

The small notes in measures 32, 36, 37 are not counted, but put in between the large notes, which must speak when their time comes. Hence the grace notes are played in time stolen from the previous large note. In measure 43 the chords must be very connected.

THE MAIN MELODY—The beautiful Melody runs for 16 measures, measures 46 (third count) to 62.

During this time the melody exactly fills each measure, without any rest or break of tone. Therefore, begin by studying out the melody to find which notes belong to it and which do not; then to find also which notes are played with the left hand (measures 48, 52, 53, 54, 56, 58, 59, 60). Then play the melody, making it sing in a serious and noble manner, taking care, when the left hand has a melody tone, that it exactly fits in. The difficult chords in which the embellishing figure sometimes occurs must be carefully studied.

In the repetition of the main melody, Melody I (measures 67 to 83) changes in the harmony occur in measures 76, 78, 80, etc. These must be carefully worked out.

When properly played, this melody should sing in a very sustained manner, like a fine solo voice; and the chords supporting it should be stronger or softer, according to the intensity of the feeling, and the sharp embellishing figure put in exactly where it is written.

THE AFTERMATH—Everything that happens after measure 83 belongs to what poets call the "Aftermath"—a finishing up. In this case the material consists of a melodic suggestion (last 8th in measures 83, 84, 85, etc.), with fast running work put in during certain long melody tones. The runs in this edition are given precisely as Gottschalk used to play them, and not in two different ways. Melody K is precisely the same as Melody J, except the enlargement of melody in measure 93. In Melody L (measure 102) the runs become longer and lead downwards, suggesting a return to repose. In measure 107 Melody M begins, in which the right hand plays trills or embellishing figures. The grace-note chords in measures 117, 118 are played like spread chords, the top note being the count.

In memorizing "The Last Hope," begin by learning the main melody in the first version; then in the second. Then take the introduction and learn each melody in turn; finally the "aftermath," which will be easy to remember if studied with care, but will take considerable practice to play fast enough and delicately enough in the running work.

THE PEDAL throughout is used in practically every measure, and often several times in a measure, to add sweetness, and to connect chords. Be sure that unlike harmonies do not intermingle, owing to your not taking and releasing the pedal with sufficient care.

RATE OF SPEED—The most effective rate of speed for this piece should be about 60 for quarters; or by pendulum, 36 up to 40 inches in length for quarter-notes.

THE LAST HOPE.

MEDITATION.

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Revised and annotated by
W. S. B. Mathews.

L. M. GOTTSCHALK, Op. 16.

Religioso. $\text{♩} = 36 \text{ to } 40 \text{ inches.}$ $\text{♩} = 60$

A. *p* 1 2 3 4 5 *pp lightly* 6 *Like flying.* 8

B. *L* 7 8 9 10 11 12 *pp* *(u. c.)*

C. *L* 13 14 *p espress.* 15 16 *(t. c.)*

D. *a little faster.* 17 18 *cresc.* 19 20 *con anima* 21 *mf* 22 23 *dim.* 24 25 *rall.* 26

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volante
8

27 *p armonioso.* 28 *pp lightly* 29 30

Ed. (u.c.)

E. *Well sung.*

31 *p* 32 33 *pp* 34

(t.c.) *Ed.* *(u.c.)*

con espress.

F. 8

35 *p* 36 37 38 *p*

(t.c.) *Ed.* *Ed.*

8 *sparkling*

L R 39 *p brilliantly* 40 *scintillante*

Ed.

5

41 *p*

42

43 *mf*

44 *pp*

45

46 *p*

47 *The melody well marked and sustained.*

48

49

50

51 *The Last Hope. 8. 8.*

52 *espress.*

53

54 *pp*

6

55 56 57 58

L cresc.

59 60 61 62

pp espress. p

In singing tone.

63 64 65 66

L pp (u.c.)

67 68 69

I. Bring out the melody and make it sing expressively. (l.c.)

70 71 72

73 melody marked. 74 75

espress.

R

p

L

p

76 77 78 79

80 81 82 83

espress.

J.

8
brillante
pp espress.
 84
 85
 86

87
 88 *brillante*
 89 *p* *poco rit.*
elegante

90 *a tempo*
 91
 92 *pp*
rapido
K.

93
 94
 95

8 7 8 1 3 7 8 9

brillante

96

97

poco rit.

98

rapido
a tempo

Red.

Red.

Red.

Flying, rapidly, harmoniously.

8 7 8 101

una corda
pp

99

100

101

Red.

Red.

Red. (t.c.)

L. 8 7 8 102 103

p

Red.

Red.

8 7 8 104 105

dimin.

Red.

Red.

8

13 *M.*

106 *sempre pp*

107

108 *rapido*

Red.

8

109 *scintillante*

110

111 *ppp*

Red.

8

112

113

114

115

Red.

8

8 *armonioso*

116 *pp una corda*

117

118 *ppp*

Red.

RECITATION QUESTIONS—"THE LAST HOPE."

1. What is the Signature and what the Key of this Piece?

Ans.

2. In what Key does the cadence end, in measure 23? And what is the Key in measure 27?

Ans.

3. Do the grace notes in measures 32, 33, 36 have time counted to them? If not, where do they get their time?

Ans.

4. How can you sustain the melody tone F Sharp, in measure 47, through two counts, when you have to play the embellishing figure two octaves higher during the last half of the first beat?

Ans.

5. Do you find any other cases where the melody has to be sustained while the hand is away doing something else? If so, specify four measures where this sort of thing happens.

Ans.

6. How many melody tones are there in measure 57? Which ones are played with the left hand?

Ans.

7. How many melody tones are there in measure 73 and which are played by the left hand?

Ans.

8. On the whole, which parts of this piece please you best?

Ans.

9. A pendulum of what length will give the speed of quarter notes in this piece?

Ans.

10. Give the dates of Gottschalk's birth and death; also the place of his birth.

Ans.

For Teacher's Record

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